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ARE THE REPUBLICANS IN TO STAY?

BY THE HON. GEORGE F. HOAR, UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM
MASSACHUSETTS.

PROPHECY is not one of the exact sciences. The wisest of our philosophers, Hosea Biglow, never showed more practical wisdom than in the admonition,

"Don't never prophesy—unless ye know."

That man must pay little heed to experience who undertakes to predict, with any confidence, the result of any future election of a President in this country. It is not true, although it is often said, that the voters of the United States are quite evenly divided between the two great political parties. There has never been a time since the war when the large majority of the legal electors of the country has not been on the side of the party that conducted the war to its successful issue. But it is true that the power which has overthrown free government in so many Southern States can still, by lawless processes, control so many votes in the Electoral Colleges that the next election of President must be decided by States in which the two political parties are nearly equal in numbers. We have, unhappily, had too many lessons that have taught us how slight are the causes which may change votes enough in what are called the pivotal States to give a majority to one party or the other. In addition to the chapter of pure accidents, like a heavy storm, or a flood, many petty circumstances, sometimes the fault of the candidate, sometimes contrived by dishonest and designing men, have decided the voice of great States. An unwise sentence in a letter of Henry Clay lost him New York and brought in Polk and Texas. The infamous forgery of the Morey letter deprived General Garfield of all the votes of California but one. That one was saved to him by the

popular dislike of a Democratic candidate for elector. The "artful aid" of Burchard's not very "apt alliteration" cost Mr. Blaine votes enough to enable his opponents to take from him the electoral vote of New York, and gave the country four years of Cleveland. If the course of foreign trade should cause a large export of specie from this country, and we should thereby be unable to maintain silver in circulation at its present nominal value as compared with gold, it is not unlikely that the party then in power would suffer seriously from such a condition of things, and be compelled by public indignation to give place to opponents quite as responsible for the evil as itself.

But we know better how to protect ourselves against these things to-day, so far as the Northern States are concerned. If we are able to defend ourselves against accidents, we can see no good reason why we may not expect the Republican party to keep the control of the executive, legislative, and judicial power of the country for another twenty-five years, and why we may not feel sure that it will retain its organization, its strength, its courage, and its ascendancy everywhere in the country where the American spirit dwells, where elections are free and the people well educated.

In the first place, the charge, so often made against the Republican party, especially by renegades, that it has lost its ancient virtue, that it has grown corrupt, that symptoms of disease, and decay, and dissolution are manifesting themselves, will not bear examination.

At the close of an argument on the question of jurisdiction, during the trial of General Belknap, in 1876, I summed up some of the evils which had grown up under Republican rule in the disturbed period which followed the war. Five United States judges driven from office by threats of deserved impeachment; four members of the House of Representatives detected in making sale of their right of nomination to West Point; the scandals of the Austrian Exposition and the Credit Mobilier; four judges of the State foremost in the Union for power and wealth impeached for corruption; Tweed and his accomplices in power in her chief city. I have never regretted, retracted, or modified a single utterance therein contained. I might have added other instances which it is hard, even now, to recall without a feeling of shame and indignation,—the dismissal of

Motley, the deposition of Sumner, the rejection of Dana, the putting the civil offices in great States at the disposition of the ambitions or the revenges of powerful and unscrupulous men, the sixty thousand fraudulent naturalization papers issued in New York. I did not then think that either the Republic or the Republican party was going to destruction. I made another speech a few months after, in which I compared the sixteen years which followed the war with the first sixteen years after the government was inaugurated,—the period of the administrations of Washington and John Adams and the first four years of Jefferson,—and showed that there had been in these administrations more corruption, not merely in proportion to the size of the country, but absolutely, than under the sixteen years of Republican rule. I never for a moment questioned the absolute honesty and patriotism of the great warrior and statesman under whose administration so many of these abuses had happened. The whole country, even his bitterest political opponent, concedes these qualities to him now. It never occurred to me that the Republican party could not and would not cure these evils when once its attention should be called to them. It never occurred to me that the remedy was to go over to the enemy ; that the wrong-doings of the party that loved liberty were to be remedied by putting the country in the power of those who hated it ; that we were to substitute for men who committed offences against the Treasury men who committed crimes against the elective franchise ; that men who used patronage to gain political power were to be advantageously exchanged for men who used fraud and murder for the same end. Washington and the pure patriots who were his companions set themselves resolutely to resist and to suppress the evils of their time. But they did not send to England for Benedict Arnold. They did not restore the Tories to power. They did not go down on their knees to George III. and ask him to take them back into favor.

Among the marvellous achievements of the Republican party, none is more marvellous than the steady lifting itself and purifying the public service which went on until the change of executive power. The world had never seen an instance of a purer or more efficient body of public servants than that which President Cleveland found in office when he came in, in March, 1885.

Subject, then, to the dangers above suggested, which must exist wherever elections are free, which exist in England and France to a far greater degree than in the United States, it is believed that the Republican party is likely to enjoy a permanent tenure of power.

This view is sustained

(1) By a consideration of the quality and temper of the Republican party as compared with the quality and temper of its great antagonist.

(2) By a consideration of its composition—of the communities, States, and classes of men from which its strength comes, as compared with those from which comes the strength of its competitor.

(3) By a consideration of its history, as contrasted with that of the Democratic party.

(4) By a statement of the doctrines, purposes, and measures of the Republican party, which give promise of health, strength, vitality, permanence, touching the very life and health of the Republic; while those of the Democratic party are in their very nature temporary, short-lived, perishable, trivial, cutaneous.

(5) The new States and the new immigration give promise of large reënforcement of strength to the Republicans.

First—The Republican and Democratic parties differ radically from each other in quality and temper. There are men of all sorts—good men, bad men, brave men, timid men, conservatives, radicals—in both. But the men who have given character to the great free States of the North are, in the main, the men who have given and now give character to the Republican party. The men who gave character to the slave States of the South and to the civil administration of New York city are, in the main, the men who have given and who now give character to the Democratic party. It was always bold enough where the interests of slavery required audacity. It is bold enough now where boldness is needed to grasp political power for the Southern oligarchy which controls it. But in regard to all the measures on which depend the prosperity and progress of a free and growing people it is timid, reactionary, obstructive. President Harrison well characterized it as the “against” party. As he said in his powerful speech at Des Moines, Iowa, in 1883,

“It was against freedom in Kansas; it was against the war; it was against the draft; it was against emancipation; it was against a greenback currency; it was

against reconstruction; it was against the amendments; it was against the Kuklux laws; it was against the Civil-Rights Bill; it was against the act to strengthen the public credit; it was against the resumption of specie payments. But it is not against any of these things now—it is underneath them."

It may be added that it was against the protective tariff; it was against the internal-revenue system; it is against the abolition of that system; it is against the Homestead Law; it is against measures for coast defence; it is against rebuilding the navy; it is against all practical measures for reviving our merchant marine; it was against the admission of the new States that are now coming in. The temper of the Republican party, on the other hand, leads it to be always on the look-out for new legislation, new improvements, and to use the vast legislative forces of the country, in all constitutional and practicable ways, in aid of its material and moral progress and welfare. It is the party that stands for something. It is on the growing side of the great political issues of the time. It has positive policies, not merely negative policies.

Second—When we consider the composition of the two parties, the States, communities, and classes of men from which the strength of each comes, we can form some rational judgment which has the larger and stronger vitality; which is the more congenial to the spirit of the nineteenth century, and which is likely to be the more congenial to the better and loftier spirit of the twentieth.

The Democratic party is made up, in substance, of the great bulk of the old owners of slave-labor and slave plantations, and of their children; of that portion of the population of our great cities and towns that were brought up where there were no free schools; of the keepers of liquor-saloons and those under their influence and control. Its strength is greatest where free elections are unknown and where the great historic frauds on the ballot have been committed in the past. The Republican party is made up, in substance, of New England; of the agricultural portions of New York and Pennsylvania; the States of the great free Northwest, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, whose territory was Freedom's birthday gift to the nation in the great year of the Constitution; Kansas and Nebraska, fruits of our first great conflict with the slave-power; Oregon, Washington and California—the larger New England which is coming into life on the Pacific; the Dakotas; Maine and Iowa, which stand at the head of all

human societies in the matter of education. These are the communities whose title to the confidence of the future is to be measured against those of Mississippi, and Louisiana, and South Carolina, and New York city.

The Bureau of Education a few years ago published a map of illiteracy, in which the territory of the United States was depicted in colors, the depth of the black shade indicating the degree of ignorance in different quarters as disclosed by the census of 1880. Afterward a newspaper published a colored map indicating the quarters of the country where the Democratic voters were most numerous and Democratic policies were ascendant. With slight and unimportant changes, the map of illiteracy would have answered for the map of Democracy.

There are some admirable men in the Democratic party. There are noble men among the Southern leaders. I have more than once borne willing and enthusiastic testimony to the many great and noble traits of the Southern people. When the fear of the negro is not before their eyes, and they are not possessed by the greed for political power, they are capable of excellent service to the State, both in war and peace. A prominent Alabama Democrat is said to have declared lately that, were it not for the negro, Alabama would be as surely Republican as Massachusetts.

But, giving our Democratic brethren all due credit for individual excellence, the fact remains that the men who do the work of piety and charity in our churches; the men who administer our school systems; the men who own and till their own farms; the men who perform skilled labor in the shops; the soldiers, the men who went to the war and stayed all through; the men who paid the debt, and kept the currency sound, and saved the nation's honor; the men who saved the country in war, and have made it worth living in in peace, commonly, and as a rule, by the natural law of their being, find their place in the Republican party; while the old slave-owner and slave-driver, the saloon-keeper, the ballot-box-stuffer, the Kuklux, the criminal class of the great cities, the men who cannot read or write, commonly, and as a rule, by the natural law of their being, find their congenial place in the Democratic party.

Third—The consideration of the history of the two parties encourages a like hope. The history of one party is a history of success. The history of the other is a history of failure. Human.

nature, especially American nature, must be largely changed before the people will listen to Democracy and Mugwumpery imploring them not to judge of parties by their records. Sir William Vernon Harcourt put this thing well in his great speech at Oxford in 1873.

"I am old enough to recollect the great influence and authority which the Duke of Wellington exercised over the English people. They did not say, 'Don't talk to us about Waterloo and the Peninsula. That is an old story. We know all about that. What battle are you going to fight next?' They thought and felt very differently. They said, 'Here is a man who has rendered us great services, and in whom we therefore trust that he will, if need be, render us great services again'; and those sentiments of national gratitude and national confidence were founded upon the instincts of generosity and patriotism. Well, what is true of great leaders of armies, is true also of great leaders of political parties, and of great political parties themselves. Their past is not forgotten. It is the solid basis of the confidence they enjoy."

The future will have its great occasions, its great perils, its great trials, its great opportunities, its great interests. They will be as much greater than those of the past as the sixty millions of 1890 will be greater than the thirty millions of 1860. The people will then inquire, not as to the foibles and faults of individual leaders, but for the men and the party that created the protective tariff, which made the United States the greatest manufacturing nation on earth; that turned our twelve thousand millions of wealth into thirty thousand millions and made the United States the richest nation on earth; that made freemen and citizens of four million slaves and made the United States the freest nation on earth; that enlisted, organized, and sent back to civil life a vast army, and created a great navy, constructed on principles not invented when it came into power, thereby exhibiting the United States as the strongest nation on earth; that contrived the national banking system; that created a currency which circulates throughout the world on an equality with gold; that incurred a vast debt and made provision for its payment,—with these measures making the credit of the country the best in the world; that devised and inaugurated the beneficent homestead system; that built the Pacific railroads; that compelled France to depart from Mexico; that exacted apology and reparation from Great Britain; that overthrew the doctrine of perpetual allegiance, and required the great powers of Europe hereafter to let our adopted citizens alone; that made honorable provision for invalid soldiers and sailors. They will put their confidence there. In every great crisis pregnant with the people's fate, they will turn aside from the

men who opposed and obstructed all these things, The men who have forsaken us will return. The Mugwump and the Independent will come skurrying back. The Free-trader will forget his theory, and the scholar his dream. The capitalist will know where to look for security to his property, the laborer for good wages for his labor, the patriot for safety and honor for his country. I think, even now, the true patriot, though a Democrat, will rather trust the extension of our foreign trade to Mr. Blaine of the South American Commission than to Mr. Bayard of the Fishery Treaty.

Fourth—The doctrines, purposes, and measures of the Republican party touch the very life and health of the Republic. They give promise of health, strength, vitality, permanence. Those of the Democratic party are in their very nature temporary, short-lived, perishable, trivial, cutaneous.

A party extending over near fifty States and Territories must tolerate much variety of opinion in non-essentials. Its members will sometimes differ with each other as to the measures best adapted to accomplish purposes that are essential. But the Republican party has its creed and its statement of faith, from which no man can depart and maintain his Republicanism. Its Bible, its Creed, its Thirty-nine Articles, its Five Points, its Ten Commandments, are summed up in six essential propositions :

I—The equality of every individual citizen with every other, not only in legal rights, but in every opportunity and privilege of the State.

II—The obligation of the State to see that every citizen has an education which shall fit him for these duties and privileges.

III—The absolute freedom and purity of elections. The box where the American citizen casts his vote should be sacred as a sacramental vessel.

IV—The standard of wages must be kept up to the highest possible point. To that end, the policy of protection to American labor must be maintained.

V—Polygamy, which destroys the sanctity of the home, must be extirpated.

VI—The drinking-saloon, which corrupts and debauches the soul, and destroys the health of body and mind, must be suppressed.

This dignity and equality of manhood in a Republican State,

to which all the others above stated are essential, is the point to which all human society is tending. All the great forces of the universe are on its side. All the constitutional amendments, all the great measures tending to this end which have been adopted, or are proposed, are of Republican origin, and have been brought to pass or proposed against Democratic opposition. Does any thoughtful student of history doubt that they are strengthening day by day, and that the party whose wagons are fastened to those stars must be strengthening also? Will the people ever abandon either till it is accomplished?

The challenge has often been given and never answered that the Democrats should name any good national measure that they have either passed or tried to pass having either of these ends in view. I now think of no important law on our statute-book that is of Democratic origin, except the sub-treasury system and the Bland Silver Bill. Wherever wealth, education, power go, there Republican principles strengthen. As fast as the New South gets her factories and workshops the principle of protection is spreading.

Fifth—The new States and the new immigration give promise of large reënforcement to the Republicans. That party is likely to be the party of the future to which the people of the pioneer States join themselves by such majorities. As we write, Washington, North Dakota, and South Dakota are reported as having given large Republican majorities; while Montana, which a few years ago seemed as hopelessly Democratic as Kentucky, is reported as having chosen a Republican Congressman, with its Legislature in doubt. The new immigration, also, is bringing valuable addition to Republican strength. The steadfast, industrious, intelligent Scandinavian, lover of home, lover of country, lover of schools, lover of wife and children, finds his congenial place in the Republican party.

For these reasons, if the Republican party be but true to its ideals, I believe the future of the Republican party is as assured as the future of America. It will live, and grow, and rule until the South, like the North, is covered with workshops where workmen get fair and ample wages; until the returns of the elections everywhere represent the honest expression of the people's will; until, in America, the soul of man is revered everywhere without regard to the accident of his birth or the color of his skin; until the drinking-saloon is dethroned from its place of power in our politics; until Mormonism is extirpated,

GEO. F. HOAR.